

The Grace of God



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Thrust Statement: God's grace teaches us how to live.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:18-25; Titus 2:11-15; John 1:14-18.

The grace of God should thrill every soul that is here. Without God's grace there is not one person that is here that could be saved. I am wondering if you have responded to the grace of God. Have you turned from or to God's grace? If you have turned from God's grace, then I encourage you to repent of your sins and once more accept that which God has offered to you through His Son Jesus Christ—eternal life. Do you not remember reading from the Gospel of John the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in which our Lord Jesus told him: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:16-17).^[1]

Do you think that your sins are too vile, too base, too wretched, too low, too bad, and too vicious for God to forgive? There is not one who is present who cannot cry out as Paul did in his first letter to the Christians at Corinth: “by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10). If you are saved, I pray that you will always remember that you are what you are by the grace of God. But Paul did not stop with his acknowledgement of his rebirth; he continued his thoughts by saying, “his grace to me was not without effect” (1 Corinthians 15:10). I ask you the question: Is God's grace without effect in your life? Has God's grace made a difference in how you live? Has God's grace made a difference in how you treat others? Has God's grace made a difference in how you treat your wife or husband? Has God's grace made a difference in how you treat your

children? Has God's grace made a difference in how you treat your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Paul became a Christian as a result of God's grace. And as a result of that grace, God's grace saturates Paul's letters. Does God's grace saturate your conversation? Listen to Paul as he exclaims, "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (**Romans 3:24**). Again, he extols the grace of God to demonstrate the greatness of God's grace even in the face of sin: "where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (**Romans 5:20**). Once more, Paul brings us face to face with the savior, saying, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (**2 Corinthians 8:9**). Again, he tells us that "by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).

GRACE LIBERATES MEN AND WOMEN

Our Lord Jesus Christ redeems us and acquits us through grace. God's grace has appeared to all men. God extends an invitation. Jesus extends an invitation. The Spirit extends an invitation. The *ekklesia* of God extends an invitation. John the apostle says, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (**Revelation 22:17**). God's grace is for all. It is in this vein that Paul writes: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (**Titus 2:11**). Not only did God redeem us through our Lord Jesus, but He also ordained that His people should be involved in good works.

Listen again to Paul as he reminds Titus of this truth: "It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (**Titus 2:12-14**). This is the same truth that Paul writes to the Christians of Ephesus: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (**Ephesians 2:10**).

God Redeems Us from the Slavery of Sin

Every Christian is a new creation in Christ Jesus. But this rebirth is not man's doing, but God's. Paul says, "we are God's workmanship." Since Christians have a new nature, then "we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin" (**Romans 6:6-7**). Your life is a life that is to be lived to God. Paul again reminds the Christians at Rome:

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer

yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace (**Romans 6:8-10**).

One cannot help but recall the words of Peter as he calls attention to redemption in Christ: “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (**1 Peter 1:18-19**). No wonder Paul tells the Christians at Colosse: “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (**Colossians 1:14**). John records a scene in heaven in which the twenty-four elders sang a new song about the Lamb of God:

You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”

The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped (**Revelation 5:9-14**).

ILLUSTRATION OF GOD’S REDEMPTION FROM SIN: JOHN NEWTON

On March 10, 1748, John Newton (1725-1807), while returning to England from Africa during a storm turned to Thomas a Kempis’s book, *Imitation of Christ*. God used the message of this book by Kempis (1380-1471) to plant the seed that eventually led to his conversion and repudiation of slavery. At the age of thirty-nine, John Newton was ordained by the Anglican Church. His work for the next fifteen years (1764-1779) was a very successful ministry. He repeatedly told of his early life and conversion. During this time he introduced the singing of hymns that expressed the simple, heartfelt faith of his preaching rather than the singing of the Psalms. Until the time of his death at the age of eighty-two, John Newton never ceased to marvel at God’s mercy and grace that had so changed his life.^[2]

One of the most beloved songs—even to this day—is the hymn that he wrote about his redemption, “Amazing Grace.” Listen to the words of Newton as he poured out his heart in amazement:

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found.
Was blind but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the Sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we’d first begun.

Do you stand in awe of God’s matchless grace? Do you want to be free from the condemnation of sin? Do you want eternal life? Then, remember the words of Jesus: “**If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed**” (**John 8:36**). On an earlier occasion, Jesus tells a crowd: “**My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day**” (**John 6:40**). Jesus paid the price of redemption. In order for God to demonstrate His justice and, at the same time, justify sinful man, He had to give His Son. Paul paints a picture of man’s redemption with these words:

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (**Romans 3:21-26**).

This salvation is so great that even the heavenly host broke out in praise. Prior to this rapture of praise, Luke records the visit of an angel to some shepherds in a field:

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” ([Luke 2:8-12](#)).

Luke then informs Theophilus (Book written to Theophilus—[Luke 1:3](#)) that “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests’” ([Luke 2:14-15](#)).

Prior to the birth of Jesus, Matthew gives his readers additional information concerning the prophecy of this birth. Since Joseph, future husband of Mary, did not know about this miraculous involvement on the part of God, he sought to divorce her quietly. But following Joseph’s contemplation of divorce from Mary, after he was informed that Mary was pregnant, then an angel of God intervened. Listen as Matthew reports an angel’s admonition concerning this pregnancy:

“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us” ([Matthew 1:20-23](#)).

John calls attention to the wonder of it all when he says, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known ([John 1:14-18](#)).

CONCLUSION

What does all this mean to you? Does God’s grace affect your life? Are you zealous for good works? Are you denying ungodliness and worldly lust? Are you kind and gentle? Do you love the people of God? In concluding this message on “The Grace of God,” it is appropriate that I leave with you the words of one who understood the wonder of it all. In Paul’s letter to Titus, he reminds him of this grace and how it should affect his life and those who have been redeemed:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all

authority. Do not let anyone despise you ([Titus 2:11-15](#)).

Message Delivered at the Following Congregations

Oakwood Hills Church
DeFuniak Springs, FL
Date: June 18, 1999
Time: 7 p.m.
Occasion: Gospel Meeting
Present:

^[1] All Scripture citations are from *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984, unless stated otherwise.

^[2] See Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 Hymn Stories* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1982), 28-31.